

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 HONG K 01822 190432Z

10

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 SAJ-01 OMB-01 SAM-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02 /073 W

----- 015269

R 190228Z FEB 76

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9183

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

FBIS OKINAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 1822

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PROP, CH

SUBJ: THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE

REF: PEKING 0256

SUMMARY: A NUMBER OF FACTORS SUGGEST THAT THE POLITICAL DEBATE CURRENTLY RAGING IN PEKING IS BEING CONDUCTED WITHIN A RATHER CAREFULLY DEFINED FRAMEWORK. POSTER CRITICISM OF VICE PREMIER TENG HSIAO-PING HAS BEEN CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED TO DATE AND, UNLIKE THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, THE PLA HAS REMAINED IN THE BACKGROUND. MEDIA STATEMENTS, ESPECIALLY IN THE PROVINCES, INDICATE A STRONG DESIRE TO KEEP ATTACKS UNDER CONTRO, BUT COUNTERCURRENTS ESCALATING THE LEVEL OF CRITICISM AGAINST ELEMENTS WITHIN THE PARTY KEEP THE ATMOSPHERE TENSE. CONSIDERING THE STRENGTH OF THE PRAGMATISTS, WE FEEL THE STRUGGLE WILL BE LONG, BUT WILL PROBABLY NOT BE ALLOWED TO SERIOUSLY DAMAGE THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FABRIC OF THE COUNTRY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 HONG K 01822 190432Z

1. IN THE TWELVE DAYS SINCE THE PUBLIC IDENTIFICATION OF HUA

KUO-FENG AS ACTING PREMIER, THE BIG CHARACTER POSTER AND PUBLIC MEDIA ATTACKS ON TENG HSIAO-PING HAVE BECOME PROGRESSIVELY BOLDER AND MORE EXPLICIT. WHAT BEGAN IN DECEMBER AS A RECTIFICATION CAMPAIGN IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION GRADUALLY SPREAD TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, AND WITH THE INCREASINGLY SHARP POLITICAL STRUGGLE FOLLOWING PREMIER CHOU'S DEATH, WE NOW SEE NEARLY ALL OF THE MAJOR POLITICAL CAMPAIGN THEMES OF THE PAST YEAR CONVERGING INTO WHAT APPEARS TO BE A MAJOR POLITICAL POWER STRUGGLE. WHILE WHAT EVIDENCE THERE IS AS TO THE DIRECTION OF THE STRUGGLE OFTEN TENDS TO BE CONTRADICTORY AND THE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVED ARE MURKY AT BEST, THE FOLLOWING IS AN ATTEMPT TO THEORIZE ON ITS CURRENT STATUS.

2. ALTHOUGH MUCH OF THE JARGON APPEARING IN POSTERS AND MEDIA REPORTS ON THE PRESENT POLITICAL CAMPAIGN HAVE AN OMINOUS SIMILARITY TO CULTURAL REVOLUTION SLOGANS, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF FACTORS SUGGESTING THAT THE POLITICAL DEBATE IS THUS FAR BEING CONDUCTED WITHIN A RATHER CAREFULLY DEFINED FRAMEWORK. LIKE THE BIG CHARACTER POSTERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE EDUCATION DEBATE IN EARLY JANUARY, THE PRESENT POSTER ATTACKS ON TENG HSIAO-PING APPEAR TO US AS A CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED EFFORT APPARENTLY CONTROLLED BY THE UNIVERSITY PARTY AUTHORITIES AND PROBABLY MORE SENIOR OFFICIALS AT THE CENTER. INDEED, A RECENT PROVINCIAL BROADCAST REFERS TO "EXPLICIT DIRECTIVES ISSUED BY CHAIRMAN MAO AND THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON UNFOLDING MASS DEBATE."

3. IT MAY BE, OF COURSE, THAT MODERATE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP ARE FRUSTRATING EFFORTS TO MOBILIZE THE MASSES AGAINST THE "CAPITALIST ROADERS." EVEN DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, MAO'S EFFORTS AT MOBILIZING MASS ATTACKS AGAINST THE PARTY WERE STYMIED BY PARTY APPARATCHIKS, AND IT TOOK A MAJOR MAO SIGNAL TO "BOMBARD THE HEADQUARTERS" TO CAUSE REAL DAMAGE TO THE PARTY STRUCTURE. WE HAVE OBVIOUSLY NOT REACHED THAT POINT YET, AND WE WOULD IMAGINE THAT ALL CULTURAL REVOLUTION REHABILITEES IN THE PARTY, ARMY AND GOVERNMENT--AS WELL AS THEIR SYMPATHIZERS--WILL DO THEIR BEST TO SEE THAT THIS STAGE IS NEVER REACHED.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HONG K 01822 190432Z

4. ONE ORGANIZATION CRUCIAL TO THE DIRECTION WHICH THE STRUGGLE WILL ULTIMATELY TAKE IS THE PLA, CURRENTLY ABSENT FROM THE POLITICAL STAGE BUT OBVIOUSLY BEING COURTED BY ALL FACTIONS BEHIND THE SCENES. DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, MAO LEANED HEAVILY ON THE SUPPORT OF DEFENSE MINISTER LIN BIAO, AND THE PLA INITIALLY HELPED ORGANIZE THE RED GUARDS. IN THE CURRENT STRUGGLE, THE PLA'S POSI-

TION IN UNKNOWN, DEFENSE MINISTER YEH CHIEN-YING IS REPORTEDLY AILING, AND THE ACTING MINISTER, GENERAL CHEN HSI-LIEN, HAS NOT MADE A PUBLIC APPEARANCE SINCE JANUARY 19. OF THE RANKING PLA OFFICIALS WHO HAVE MADE RECENT PUBLIC APPEARANCES, HOWEVER, IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT ALL ARE CULTURAL REVOLUTION REHABILITEES, WHO WE ASSUME WOULD HAVE LITTLE SYMPATHY FOR A NEW UPHEAVAL.

5. MEDIA STATEMENTS, ESPECIALLY IN THE PROVINCES, ALSO INDICATE A STRONG DESIRE TO KEEP ATTACKS UNDER CONTROL, BUT, AS IN THE CASE OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, THERE ARE COUNTER-CURRENTS ESCALATING THE LEVEL OF CRITICISM AGAINST ELEMENTS WITHIN THE PARTY. STATEMENTS IN THE PEOPLE'S DAILY SUCH AS "ANY METHOD WHICH WEAKENS OR DESTROYS PARTY LEADERSHIP IS WRONG" CLEARLY INDICATE AN ATTEMPT TO KEEP A LID ON THE STRUGGLE, BUT THESE ARE COUNTERED BY SHARP CRITICISMS OF THOSE IN THE PARTY WHO DISTORT CHAIRMAN MAO'S LINE AND CAUSE SPLITS WITHIN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

6. AN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE AREA WHICH HAS COME INCREASINGLY UNDER CRITICISM IS THE OVEREMPHASIS ON MODERNIZATION. THE "FOUR MODERNIZATIONS"--AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, NATIONAL DEFENSE, AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY--CONSTITUTE A KEY POLICY LAID DOWN BY THE FOURTH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS AND EMBODIED IN CHOU EN-LAI'S SPEECH THERE. THEY ARE THE BLUEPRINT NOT ONLY FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEAR PLAN, BUT FOR CHINESE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEXT QUARTER CENTURY. ATTACKS ON OVEREMPHASIZING THIS PROGRAM HAVE APPEARED IN RECENT DAYS, BUT THESE HAVE NOT BEEN AS SEVERE AS THE ATTACKS AGAINST CAPITALIST ROADERS WITHIN THE PARTY. ANY ESCALATION IN ATTACKS AGAINST ECONOMIC POLICY, HOWEVER, WOULD BE AN INDICATION THAT THE MODERATES WERE LOSING THEIR ABILITY TO KEEP THE CAMPAIGN WITHIN BOUNDS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 HONG K 01822 190432Z

7. AS THE POSTER CAMPAIGN RAGES ON, TENG'S OWN POSITION SEEMS INCREASINGLY WEAK. RECENT PRIVATE STATEMENTS BY CHINESE OFFICIALS INDICATE THAT HE CAN NO LONGER EXPECT TO BECOME PREMIER, AND THE SHARPNESS OF THE ATTACKS IS A SIGN THAT HIS OTHER POSITIONS MIGHT ALSO BE IMPERILED. THE MORE IMPORTANT QUESTION, HOWEVER, REMAINS THE OUTLOOK FOR STABILITY IN CHINA. PRC OFFICIALS IN HONG KONG HAVE GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO ASSURE US THAT THE OUTLOOK IS GOOD. GIVEN THE SWIFT EROSION OF TENG'S POSITION, NOTHING IS CERTAIN. HOWEVER, CONSIDERING THE STRENGTH OF THOSE FORCES, INCLUDING REHABILITEES BOTH IN PEKING AND IN THE PROVINCES, WHO WE PRESUME TO BE COMMITTED TO A RELATIVELY STABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MODERNIZATION OF CHINA, WE WOULD EXPECT A LONG STRUGGLE BUT ONE WHICH WILL PROBABLY NOT

BE ALLOWED TO SERIOUSLY DAMAGE THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC  
FABRIC OF THE COUNTRY.  
CROSS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL STABILITY, POLITICAL LEADERS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 19 FEB 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976HONGK01822  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760062-0079  
**From:** HONG KONG  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760236/aaaabevi.tel  
**Line Count:** 172  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 PEKING 256  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 10 MAY 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <10 MAY 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <20 SEP 2004 by KelleyW0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE  
**TAGS:** PINT, PGOV, PROP, CH, (TENG HSIAO-PING)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006